

LORENZO ATTEWALL WOOTTON

Born March 11, 1898, Midway, Utah to John Alma Wootton and Martha Melvina Huffaker.

When Ren was a small boy, his father had him drive the cows to the pasture, telling him to hurry back, which he seldom did. He went swimming with the Price girls in Snake Creek. He was the oldest boy and could give some help to his father, so he was often scolded for not obeying.

One day when he returned home, quivering from fear because he had stayed so long, his father said to him, "Hand me that rope Ren," and Ren cried, "You're going to hang me!"

Machinery fascinated him. He took his mother's sewing machine to pieces and oiled every part. He even attempted to do the same to the farm machinery.

His grandfather had the first threshing machine in the valley. To Ren it was such a wonderful monster, he couldn't resist it. He followed his grandfather when he went to thresh, doing anything they would let him do to help.

He spent much time at his grandfather's ranch in Stringtown. It was a beautiful place. Leafy trees hung over Stake Creek that ran through the meadows. He drove his grandmother to take eggs and butter to the store to exchange for cloth or other necessities. There was always a sack of candy for Ren.

Lorenzo Attewall Wootton

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The horse Ren drove was called Mage. Although he was a pet, he seemed almost human. Carefully he would draw the buggy over the bridge and along the road as though he were being kind to the little boy whose hands held the reins. If the quaint little Epperson man was by the hitching post, Mage stamped her foot and snorted.

Father and Mother Wootton moved with several of his brothers to homestead in Myton, in preparation for the great boom that was to come with the railroad. It was a grueling experience for the parents but exciting for the children. Ren rode the wild prairies on his horse, seeking adventure behind every mountain and in every valley. They raised tomatoes and sweet, juicy watermelons. They never grew in Midway. The railroad did not come, but the work-weary laborers came back to their Midway homes with a deed to the land in their inner pockets.

They established a sawmill up Daniel Canyon, a retail store in Heber, and a box factory on the river near Charlestor. When Ren was twelve years old, he drove a team of horses with a large load of lumber to Heber. It was a two-day journey. One night was spent at Whiskey Springs, so named after the outlaws and cowboys who cooled their liquor in the cold springs.

Ren was only fourteen when he operated a movie theater which his Uncle Will Wootton owned. Later he operated one in Midway. He also worked at the fish hatchery.

Ren's folks moved to Heber for a few years while he was in the elementary grades. His mother sent lunch to school with him, which usually included a boiled egg. His family raised chickens, so they had plenty of eggs. These eggs served important purposes. A boiled egg kept hands warm and could be exchanged at noon to Henry James Clegg's store for penny candy; penny candy was better than chocolates are today. It was large flat, flavorsome crystal candy all-day suckers with edible licorice sticks and plugs of chewy licorice with an Indian head pushed into it - that Indian head was a decoration for a boy's hat. There were eight little cushion caramels sealed together in vanilla or strawberry goodness and licorice whips, a solid handle and long, thin stick of licorice. Cattails almost as large as the ones growing in the marshes were also to be had. They were favorites, made of brown sugar with a coconut covering. There were marshmallow biscuits covered with chocolate. Inside was a diamond, ruby, or emerald ring. I was engaged to Dawson Lindsey in the third grade with a diamond ring from one of those biscuits.

Years after, Ren talked to Hazel Clegg, Henry James's daughter. He mentioned the hard-boiled eggs he had exchanged

for penny candy. She said, "Yes d____ you. My father could tell the boiled eggs, they went in a special bowl and every night we had them for supper." She shuddered and said, "I loathe them, even today."

Then Ren's family moved back to Midway. Grandpa Wootton tried in every way to make a living for his family. They really had a heritage of doing without. Their father managed Jack Buehler's dairy farm. He had a small farm of his own, however - a few cows, chickens, and a vegetable garden.

He went along to Silver City as superintendent of one of Jesse Knight's mines.

Ren had three close friends - Roy Huber, Reed Alplanap, and Floyd Bonner. They also had a girl friend, June Bonner, who was a wheelchair invalid. They pushed her around the small but pretty town. Other boys called them "the handcart gang."

They had chickerries, secretly taking one of their own chickens into a cabin in the hills, cleaning it, and frying it with potatoes. Roy Huber really sinned when he took his father's only rooster for their chickery.

If they were hungry for ice cream, as they often were, they bought a package of ice-cream powder, and a block of ice with a small and larger bucket they went to the pasture, milked a jersey cow, and made their ice cream. Never did it taste better.

In the winter they coasted on bobsleds and shovels, and they skied on barrel staves, sliding down the steep Midway hills shouting for joy.

They had no cars, but each had his own horse. In the summer with a bedroll strapped on their saddle and a sack of lunch, they rode to Deer Creek Springs. They would reach under the bank and bring out a seven or eight-inch trout, or maybe a twelve-inch one. Fried crisp in bacon fat, the fish were really a feast. The boys explored, played games, joked and had a thrilling vacation.

Mona's and my delight was riding our horses. I still declare that neither planes, automobiles, nor trains can give the same thrill of riding a horse against the sun and the wind, under the blue sky with endless space to see.

Clegg's pasture was in Midway Lane. Our horses just naturally dashed on to Midway where we met Ren and Nate Coleman. We would go to Foxes Den, a pot-rock lined cove, filled with warm water. Lichens and flowers bordered it. We sat on the pot rock eating snacks the boys had brought, planning parties, dates, or just laughing for fun.

Ren use to come to see me, riding Grey Diamond, or in a buggy with his friends or maybe with just Roy Huber who lived across the road and who was as close to us as a brother. I never even thought about these visits until Roy told us years after that all the boys had envied Ren because he had had a girl friend.

Once in a while, Aunt Lota, bless her, let him take her Buick. Then we did celebrate.

I loved winter when we nestled down against the warm rocks and under quilts to go sleigh riding. We also coasted and skated.

Ren drove to high school. He, Floyd Bonner, and his sister Luella rode together. She often says that the way those two drove she marvels she is still alive. They did not have school buses.

Ren was a good student; he had a keen mind, and he had the power to concentrate - which he never lost.

He came to school looking like a fashion model, wearing a dress suit, stiff collar, gay tie on this white shirt, and polished shoes. On his face was his million-dollar smile.

He realized the dream of many boys; he played the drums in Karl Bank's orchestra.

Dances and basketball games were held in the amusement hall. We always walked and were glad for the long distance. Walking has many advantages.

One night it was so frosty cold that Ren's rubbers froze and fell from his feet. I ran ahead, but he soon joined me in our warm home.

When we were in our senior year, Ren stopped school and got work in Silver City. He stayed with Aunt Floss Willes.

One morning he and Tom Jacobs decided to join the army. World War I - "The war to end all wars" - had begun. Patriotism swelled in the hearts of everyone.

All our friends were cheered on their way at the depot with a kiss and a box of homemade candy.

Ren was special to his mother and Uncle Durmont. We drove to Provo where he alone was leaving on the train for Watervliet Arsenal, New York. It was hard to say good-by, but he assured me he would return.

He was shipped to France. He was first in the small-arms section of 101 Mobile Ordinance, 26th Yankee Division. He went to school in an old castle surrounded by a moat. He put guns together and mended broken ones, blindfolded. It is terrible to think of the purpose of his training.

Later he was placed in the ordinance division. He drove trucks of supplies from the depot to the front lines. Often he stayed overnight with French peasants. He admired them. Once he stayed with a wealthy woman. She had them remove their shoes and gave them slippers to wear in the house. They slept on a high, feather mattress, covered by a smaller feather mattress. She urged them to enjoy themselves by hunting rabbits on her beautiful estate. They did not enjoy it; it was too much like shooting pets.

Some of the French were poor; sometimes a hundred pounds of sugar *would* just fall off his truck.

Many times, for protection, he drove his truck without lights. He had many narrow escapes. One night the building in which he was sleeping was shelled - his half was unharmed, the other destroyed, the occupants killed.

Corporal Wootton was assigned to the small automatic section. His captain said this about him: "He is an experienced and faithful worker. It is a pleasure to offer this unsolicited testimony and to recommend Corporal Wootton as a capable workman."

Armistice was signed November 11, 1918. We were wild with joy. The tabernacle bell was rung loudly and joyously, the band marched, flags waved. Our boys - most of them - came home.

Ren sailed in April 1919 and often told how he burst into tears when he saw the Statue of Liberty.

Our first home was in Silver City. It was a beautiful home, with a porch on the east. Sun poured through the windows. The kitchen was large enough for me to cook all the good foods I wanted to feed my sweetheart; cake and cookies, pies, vegetables, meats, etc. I think there were only three rooms, but love was there and we were happy. Many friends came to see and envy us. They told me so.

Aunt Floss and Uncle Don lived there and they have always been very dear to us.

Ren was Sunday School superintendent. How the children loved him and he them. Once when they had a Fourth of July party, he gave the children candy, ice-cream cones, and

rootbeer. They ducked for apples, ran races, and had tugs-of-wars. It was a happy party.

It was at Silver City that Ren began his electric work. He helped Claud Willes wire a drain tunnel.

When Jesse Knight died, Silver City died. It is a ghost town. I am sorry. I wish we could have lived there longer.

A postwar depression made work difficult to find. Quite desperate to get a home and be making money because a baby was coming, Ren went to Smuggler, Colorado, 11,000 feet high, just above Lelluride if you fly like a bird, ten miles if you zigzag up the road. It is in San Miguel County, named after the bugaboo of mountain climbers who say, "Climb to the bottom, take pictures, and turn back, but don't go farther up the peak."

We loved Colorado. "Its beauty bankrupts the vocabulary," as Teddy Roosevelt said. "Mountains have a dreamy way of folding up a noisy day in quaint colors cool and grey." - Hanes. The scenery is staggering and the air so clear and invigorating that you find yourself eager and happy to greet the new day.

We lived in a four-story apartment built on a mountain side, anchored with huge iron cables to keep it from sliding into the deep canyon below where the river was like a silver ribbon winding down to Lelluride.

Smuggler got its name from the many miners who smuggled out enough leaf gold to enrich them for life. The gold was of a lower grade when we were there, or we might have been tempted.

On August 10, my birthday, I rode the narrow gage railroad from Montrose to Lelluride. That little train is now at Knott's Berry Farm in California. It was snowing and I felt I was going to the ends of the earth. Ren met me and we rode in a stage up the mountain to our apartment. Ren made our furniture; we had four rooms and a utility room with only a table, a scrubbing board, a tin tub, and a chemical convenience. Our kitchen had an electric stove, a cabinet built on the back of a little work table, a kitchen table, and four chairs we bought and painted. The floor was painted and Ren brought a piece of corrugated rubber from an old mill and laid it across the floor. His joy in giving that treasure to me sealed my lips against telling him how impossible it was to clean.

The living room had a Japanese grass rug; a library table with imitation leather, beautiful with gold-headed nails holding it on the top of the table; a sanitary couch with gay cretonne cover; a box painted dark green, on legs holding a Boston fern that outgrew itself against the south window. We bought one rocking chair and a straight chair. The bedroom was furnished with a bed, a small dresser, and a closet with our clothes decorating it. We both had nice clothes from our premarriage days.

Our windows were all picture windows. In the deep snow of winter we watched Finnish boys ski down the hill, almost sitting down to make the turns, or snowslides roaring down with pines and stones in their grasp. Across the valley we saw the fantastic world above the timberline where storm-dwarfed pines were low enough to walk on.

We walked in the evening; the stars and moon were near enough to reach out and pull one into our arms. We picked wild roses, one to a bush, and they measured six inches across. The flowers were gorgeous.

The Swiss baker made a Fourth of July compact bouquet of red, white, and blue. It was so beautiful, I wanted it to keep always.

I liked the people: O. Driscolls; the superintendent, at whose home we ate dinner and had parties; and Mr. Stevens, an elderly gentleman who said I looked like an actress from the Denham Theater in Denver. That thrilled me. Mr. Hogg looked every part his name, but he acted like a lamb. We loved him. Eli Marsell was the electrical superintendent who really valued Ren. He became one of our family. He enjoyed the shiny red apples Father Wootton sent us. When his sixteen-year-old daughter sloughed school and came to the mine with a group of other children, he came rushing toward me and asked me to please take care of her until he could take her home. They had adorable children. We often ate at their house. He also ate with us, and so did many of the men who were unmarried or away from home.

Ren had trouble with tonsillitis so we came to Heber where he had his tonsils out - we then moved to Columbia. The time there was brief - it was too much like living in Germany - so in 1925 we came to Heber.

When we first were in Heber, ^{Ren} dad was an electrician at the mine. Ungraveled roads and sticky black mud made travel almost impossible in the spring of the year, so he stayed at the boardinghouse, coming home weekends. He worked three shifts, graveyard from twelve to nine was cause for a divorce.

Thelma

I was happy in 1929, when he became superintendent of power. It was a nerve-racking challenge at the time. The wooden flume was worn and it sprayed water even over the road. A new generator had to be added to the rebuilding of the plant, old and worn out.

Poles were moved from the center of the roads, and heavy lines were strung all over the valley. Increasing power consumption caused constant blackouts from heavy loads. They worked almost night and day to change that. Boys on the hills shot out lines, and in the city even generators and light globes were shot out.

Perhaps worst of all, the power board had previously allowed a loose credit system. Now it was turned strictly to cash, and dad was appointed to collect old bills. I even received wrathful calls that chilled my blood.

He was the most dedicated citizen one could find. In thirty-six years he has built another plant, and filed on Deer Creek water to build a second. It may never be built now that he is gone. He dreamed of running power lines underground in the business section.

The people, appreciating a good power system with very few power shortages, became educated to cash payments for the best servant they had, electricity. They also educated the children against the destruction which caused the city so much money.

Against the protest of many citizens, Ren installed sulfur-vapor automatic lights along Center Street and several lights at both ends of Main. The state told him that inasmuch as it was a state highway project, they would furnish the lights and poles if he could install them. They were a new clear, shadow-less light which few cities had. He studied as though he were working for a doctorate degree. For over a year he read, then he was ready to install them. When he was finished, he took me to the end of Main and said, "Can you see one light out of line?" They were perfect. I cried at his accomplishment. I was so proud of him.

The power system pours \$40,000 to \$45,000 into the cities Charleston, Midway, and Heber. He lighted the towns of Charleston, Midway - also the ball parks and churchyards, for the joy of children.

Midway had trouble getting television. He talked to specialists and helped them to build a relay system over Wilson Peak, which helps television reception all over our valley.

Ren's Power Plant

A beautiful shady and grassy spot belonged to the power company. Ren discussed building a picnic park for the public. Mr. Andrew Lindsey, with young boys, built tables and fire-places. People far and near so enjoyed the park that they had to have reservations. The park was moved to Charleston when the new road was built.

There were good places up Snake Creek for skiing. Ren cleared a ski path, put up a tow rope, and took up an old bus and a stove to keep people warm. He often spent Saturdays there while many enjoyed the skiing. Boys would call, "Ren, can we ski today?"

The merchants wanted the town decorated for Christmas, so the power department bought lights and decorations. They also got pines from the hills and decorated for Christmas.

The cemetery needed more water, so Ren installed a pump. He also helped constantly with the water springs and the sewage disposal. The Osborn Company wanted to establish a sewing center here. The Mayor knew that there was no suitable building. Dad said he would be glad to convert their large pot rock warehouse into a sewing center. He did most successfully. This became our only industry where many willing workers make a good income.

When in 1960 our Bishop Berg asked Ren to assume responsibility for all lighting and electricity in our Church he was overjoyed. He worked endlessly. He converted a stoker from army surplus to heat the building. He spent his time between the hospital and the church.

When the cruel asthma weakened his heart so he passed from this life, his work at the church was completed. That was the only part which was. His service was held in the Fourth Ward. Many people tell me of their great need for his advice, help, wisdom, and kindness. I feel our valley misses him even as I do.

The cattlemen appreciated him because he let a little water run into the canal instead of running it all to the plant. It would run into the ditches in their fields to water the cattle when the cattlemen brought their herds from the range.

When young boys were worrying about building a house or following new vocations, he took time to encourage them and give a little financial help. He often spent hours helping them solve water or other problems.

Several people who needed time to pay their power bills because of adversity were granted it.

This tribute was written by Kate Clyde:

A Legacy of Light

Few people who ever lived in our town endeared themselves to the people as did "Ren" Wootton. Through the years that he served as the superintendent of light and power, he gave unstintingly of his time and talents - but most of all, he gave of himself.

There was no pretense or shame about him. He disliked the limelight or any outward show. Yet in his quiet way he became a celebrity among his townspeople.

Ren was a friend to everyone. Old people relied upon him, young people waved to him as he went by in his power truck, and little children loved him because of his interest in them. No day was too full or busy for him to stop and talk to them, give them a nickel or dime.

If a child or man was lost or drowned as happened, he led the search and he never gave up until the lost one was found, the bodies of the drowned ones found.

No one will ever know the countless hours he spent to bring better lights to our little town. He literally ate, slept, and dreamed electricity. He studied long into the night that he might improve the valley that he loved. He brought the Great White Way to the town where he spent most of his life. One of the last things he did before he left us was to erect a booster station upon the Midway Hill overlooking the valley that our television sets might work more efficient. Wherever he went he brought the light with him, whether it was in his warm friendliness, his genial smile, or through the work of his hands. What a wonderful legacy to leave behind.

In my mind's eye I think I can see him now, an infectious grin upon his face as he moves unobtrusively through the streets lighting all the lamps of heaven as he goes.

A letter came from the stake presidency pleasing him.

To Lorenzo A. Wootton and Heber Light and Power Employees,

In meetings held by members of the stake presidency, high council, and stake welfare committee, high praise and many words of appreciation have been expressed for the work you people have done in the stake's interest. I have been directed by President Cummings and coworkers to pass this appreciation on to you.

Often many unheard of hours are spent and also a great deal of skill is needed to accomplish those things so important to the progress and welfare of the people of the stake.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude and heart thanks for all the fine things you have done to help.

Sincerely,

Wasatch Stake Presidency
by Floyd Kinsey

Dad was active in the legion. Being a serviceman he thus assisted the sick veterans to enter the veteran's hospital. He also helped widows and their children to receive compensation. He was patriotic, loving the flag and serving wherever needed. For fifteen years he was head of selective service, a nerve-wracking, thankless task.

He was finance chairman of the Boy Scouts for many years and thoroughly enjoyed it. He wished his work was not so unpredictable. He would have greatly enjoyed being a Scout leader. He loved the boys.

He only valued the material things of life and the salary he received as a means of helping others, especially his own children and grandchildren. His pleasure in giving little goodies to please the grandchildren is good to remember. He gave them packages of licorice; hamburgers and potato chips or fries; ice-cream cones at Cooks, which they ate rapidly so they could run to the candy counter and look up appealingly at dad. He gave two men's pocket knives to Greg and Lewis when they were having difficulty adjusting to new grandparents. He slipped many coins, even dollars and more to them.

His sons-in-law were as dear to him as his daughters were: Barbara's husband, Ben E. Lewis, tender heart, a will inflexible. Evelyn's husband, Harry L. Swain, with a sweet singing voice, laughing good nature - taken from our lives too soon. Madelyn's husband, Don Larsen, wise to resolve and patient to perform.

HISTORY OF ELIZA OHLWILER

Your parentage, your teachings so divine
Because this heritage of mine.
Entrusted now to me. I only ask
That I may prove worthy of this sacred task.